

What is claimed is:

1. A system for facilitating multiplayer gaming over a computer network, the system comprising:

a client program running on a terminal that automatically detects when selected

5 individuals are playing certain multiplayer games on the computer network, and notifies a user of the games and the selected individuals playing the games.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the client program is further adapted to allow the user to join an individual in a game by running an instance of the game on the terminal and connecting
10 the terminal to a location hosting the game.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the client program further generates a user interface that allows the user to join an individual in a game by selecting an icon.

15 4. The system of claim 2 wherein the client program is further adapted to detect running games on the user terminal and to communicate data identifying the running games and the user over the computer network for receipt by selected individuals.

5. The system of claim 4 further comprising:

20 a second program that determines a connection status of the running games and communicates the connection status to the client program;

wherein the client program is further adapted to communicate the connection status of the running games over the computer network for receipt by the selected individuals.

25 6. The system of claim 5 wherein the second program comprises an LSP program.

7. The system of claim 5 wherein the connection status comprises an IP address hosting a corresponding game.

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8. The system of claim 5 further comprising:
one or more servers adapted to receive the data and connection status and to
communicate the data and connection status to the selected individuals.

5 9. The system of claim 2 wherein the program is further adapted to allow the user to send
and receive instant messages to and from selected individuals.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein the selected individuals include individuals stored on a
friend list created by the user.

10 11. The system of claim 10 wherein the selected individuals include individuals stored on a
friend list created by an individual stored on a friend list created by the user.

12. A computerized method for facilitating multiplayer games over a computer network,
15 comprising:
detecting when selected individuals are playing certain multiplayer games on the
computer network;
notifying a user of the games and selected individuals playing the games; and
allowing the user to join an individual in a game by running an instance of the game on a
20 user terminal and connecting the user terminal to an address hosting the game.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising:
detecting running games on the user terminal;
detecting a connection status of the running games; and
25 communicating data identifying the user, running games and connection status to the
selected individuals over the computer network.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the connection status comprises an IP address hosting a
corresponding game.

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15. The method of claim 14 further comprising:
allowing the user to send and receive instant messages to and from the selected individuals.

5 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the selected individuals comprise first individuals contained on a list associated with the user.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the selected individuals comprise second individuals included on a list associated with one or more of the first individuals.

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18. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method for facilitating multiplayer online gaming, the method comprising:

detecting when selected individuals are playing certain multiplayer games on the computer network; and

15 notifying a user of the games and the selected individuals playing the games.

19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 wherein the method further comprises:
allowing the user to join an individual in a game by running an instance of the game on a user terminal and connecting the user terminal to an address hosting the game.

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20. The computer-readable medium of claim 19, wherein the method further comprises:

detecting running games on the user terminal;

detecting a connection status of the running games; and

communicating data identifying the user, running games and connection status to the

25 selected individuals over the computer network.

21. The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the connection status comprises an IP address hosting a corresponding game.

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22. The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises:
allowing the user to send and receive instant messages to and from the selected
individuals.

5 23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the selected individuals comprise
first individuals included on a list associated with the user.

24. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the selected individuals comprise
second individuals included on a list associated with one or more of the first individuals.

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25. A computerized method for communicating over a computer network, comprising:
detecting when first individuals stored on a list associated with a user are present on the
computer network;

15 detecting when second individuals stored on a list associated with one or more of the first
individuals are present on the computer network;

notifying the user that the first and second individuals are present on the computer
network; and

allowing the user to send and receive messages to and from the first and second
individuals.

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26. The method of claim 25 wherein the messages comprise instant messages.